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RURAL SCHOOL PROBLEMS
In
WARD COUNTY, NORTH DAKOTA

By
Harold L. Greiner
Assistant Social Science Analyst

Lincoln, Nebraska
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CONTENTS

	Page
Preface	
Changes in population patterns	1
School census and school enrollment	6
Enumeration	6
Enrollment	8
Present school organization	13
Attendance areas	16
Location of farm families	19
Future school population	19
The place of the rural school in rural life	21
Possible adjustments	22
Enlarged community districts	23
The County Unit Plan	24
Possible combination of systems	24
Need for further study	24
Method of study	24
Summary	26

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Report on Unlabeled Program for Ward County, North Dakota for 1942, by
 Lester L. Hansen and Archie E. Goodman, Preliminary Report on Land Use and Soil
 of Local Government in Ward County, North Dakota, Bureau of Agricultural
 Economics, U. S. Department of Agriculture, 1940 (mimeographed).

PREFACE

The Land Use Planning Committee of Ward County indicated a need for a "study of the present school pattern in relation to school population, to the end that various school boards may be advised and assisted in bringing about desirable rearrangements of the school pattern." ^{1/} The committee has asked especially for assistance in studying possible adjustments with particular attention to location and service areas, as part of the Unified Planning Program.

High costs of school operations during a period of decreasing enrollment emphasized the need for planning and action.

This report was made to meet the needs of the planning committees and follow a threefold plan: It (1) analyzes the present school situation, (2) suggests possible solutions for the consideration of the planning committees, and, (3) develops a method whereby studies of schools may be made in sparsely populated areas by local planning groups, with a minimum of technical assistance.

Sources of revenue and costs of school operation have not been included here, because they have been analyzed in a previous report. ^{2/} Since this study deals with rural schools, data have been collected on the Minot city schools and the Model School at the State Teachers' College in Minot for comparative purposes only. No data were collected on School District No. 37, which is a joint district with McHenry County.

^{1/} Report on Unified Program for Ward County, North Dakota for 1940, p. 29.
^{2/} Peter L. Hansen and Archie B. Goodman, Preliminary Report on Land Use and Cost of Local Government in Ward County, North Dakota, Bureau of Agricultural Economics, U. S. Department of Agriculture, 1940 (mimeographed).

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Changes in Population Patterns

The present school problems in Ward County are the result of many factors, of which two of the most important are the patterns of early settlement and the population changes that have occurred and are likely to occur within the county.

Ward County is typical of the settlement of western North Dakota and eastern Montana, in that it was rather quickly settled in the 20-year period that followed the building of the railroads.

Though this area was opened for settlement under the Homestead Act of 1862, settlement was delayed, mainly because of the large extent of more accessible land in Iowa, Minnesota, and eastern North Dakota.

The Preemption Act of 1841 had little effect on the settlement of western North Dakota, as it was repealed before the major settlement of this area. The passage of the Timber Culture Act of 1878 gave the early settlers an opportunity to increase the size of their holdings but did not stimulate any influx of new settlers. 3/ In 1890, the aggregate extent of agricultural public land that could be acquired by any one person was limited to 320 acres.

The extension of the Great Northern Railroad to Minot in 1886 and the building of the "Soo Line" (Minneapolis, St. Paul & Sault Ste. Marie Railway) in 1893 brought the first large wave of settlers to this part of the country.

The Preemption and Timber Culture Acts were repealed in 1891, and this limited the opportunity of obtaining more than 160 acres of land to the purchase of Railroad Grant Land or commuted homestead land. 4/

3/ The Preemption Act of 1841 granted the settlers first option for purchase on land they had settled prior to the opening for sale, at a minimum price of \$1.25 per acre cash. The Timber Culture Act of 1878 permitted settlers to file on 160 acres of land, plant 10 acres of trees, and secure title at the end of 10 years by complying with certain regulations.

4/ Under the homestead law, a settler who wished to obtain title sooner than the 5 years required for free title could do so by commutating, which was living on the land 14 months and paying the government a minimum price of \$1.25 an acre. (Land in the Railroad Grants sold for \$2.50 an acre.)

In 1909 the Enlarged Homestead Act was passed which permitted settlers to file on 320 acres of land instead of 160 acres.

During the period 1900 to 1910 a "land boom" occurred throughout western North Dakota. Land prices in Iowa and adjoining States had risen rapidly and the people expected similar increases in the prices of all land. Large numbers of people "went west" to take advantage of the free homestead land and the cheap railroad land. The fact that many of these people filed on the land as a speculation is shown in the tremendous amounts of commuted homestead land during the decade 1900 to 1910. 5/

The total population for Ward County reflects the rapid settlement over the 20-year period. In 1890, the total population was 1,681; in 1900, the total population was 7,961; and by 1910, the figure had jumped to 25,281. A study of the total population shows that, except in the southwestern part of the county, the population peak occurred about 1910. (The peak of the population for the southwestern part occurred about 1920, because of the opening of the Indian reservation land to settlement in 1911.)

From 1910 to 1930, the total population increased from 25,281 to 33,597, an increase of 32.9 percent. With the adverse farming and economic conditions between 1930 and 1940, the total population decreased to 31,981, a loss of 1,616, or 4.8 percent.

Table 1.- Comparison of rural, urban, and total population
Ward County, 1910 - 40

Residence	1910	1920	1930	1940
Rural	18,661	18,335	17,498	15,404
Urban	6,620 <u>1/</u>	10,476	16,099	16,577
Total	25,281	28,811	33,597	31,981

1/ Includes village of north Minot (432) annexed to Minot between 1910 and 1920.

The total population for the county shows an increase between 1910 and 1940 but the statistics for the rural areas show a different picture. The population for the rural areas decreased steadily from 18,661 in 1910 to 15,404 in 1940, a decrease of 17.4 percent (table 1). The increase in the population over the 30-year period, while the population of the rural areas declined, was due to the growth of the city of Minot.

5/ For more detail on commuted homestead land, see B. H. Hibbard, A History of Public Land Policies, 1924, pp. 386-390.

Table 2 shows the rural population for each of the Land Use Planning communities in the county. (See fig. 1.)

The only locality showing a considerable increase, over the period studied, is Community 5 which embraces the country surrounding Minot. Probably this increase took place mainly in the outskirts of the city and indicates that this area had little out-migration. Communities 10 and 11 reflect the later period of settlement in the southwestern part of the county in that the population increased noticeably from 1910 to 1920, and then declined by 1940.

Table 2.- Rural population of the Land Use Planning communities
Ward County, 1910 - 40

Land Use Planning community	:	1910	:	1920	:	1930	:	1940
1	:	4,054	:	3,447	:	3,278	:	2,847
2	:	1,766	:	1,772	:	1,700	:	1,297
3	:	738	:	609	:	607	:	498
4	:	2,254	:	2,253	:	2,079	:	1,667
5	:	2,499	:	2,537	:	2,277	:	2,560
6	:	1,052	:	829	:	875	:	756
7	:	985	:	1,022	:	969	:	726
8	:	779	:	792	:	685	:	557
9	:	1,110	:	844	:	824	:	832
10	:	907	:	1,645	:	1,655	:	1,319
11	:	869	:	1,013	:	1,061	:	869
12	:	1,648	:	1,572	:	1,488	:	1,476
Total	:	18,661	:	18,335	:	17,498	:	15,404

Table 3 shows the population for all the places in Ward County that had a population of 200 persons or more in 1930. All of the places of less than a thousand persons show a decrease from 1930 to 1940 except Douglas, Ryder, and Sawyer. As Douglas and Ryder are located at a distance from the larger places, they have grown, because farm families have moved to these towns. Most of the growth of Sawyer is due to the recent development of lignite mining to the south.

Kenmare has grown because of its large service area. Many farm families move into this town.

Some of the growth of the city of Minot can be attributed to the movement of farm families to the city. Then Minot is a distributing center for a large territory in northwestern North Dakota and northeastern Montana.

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FIGURE 1.- COUNTY LAND USE PLANNING COMMUNITIES
OF WARD COUNTY.

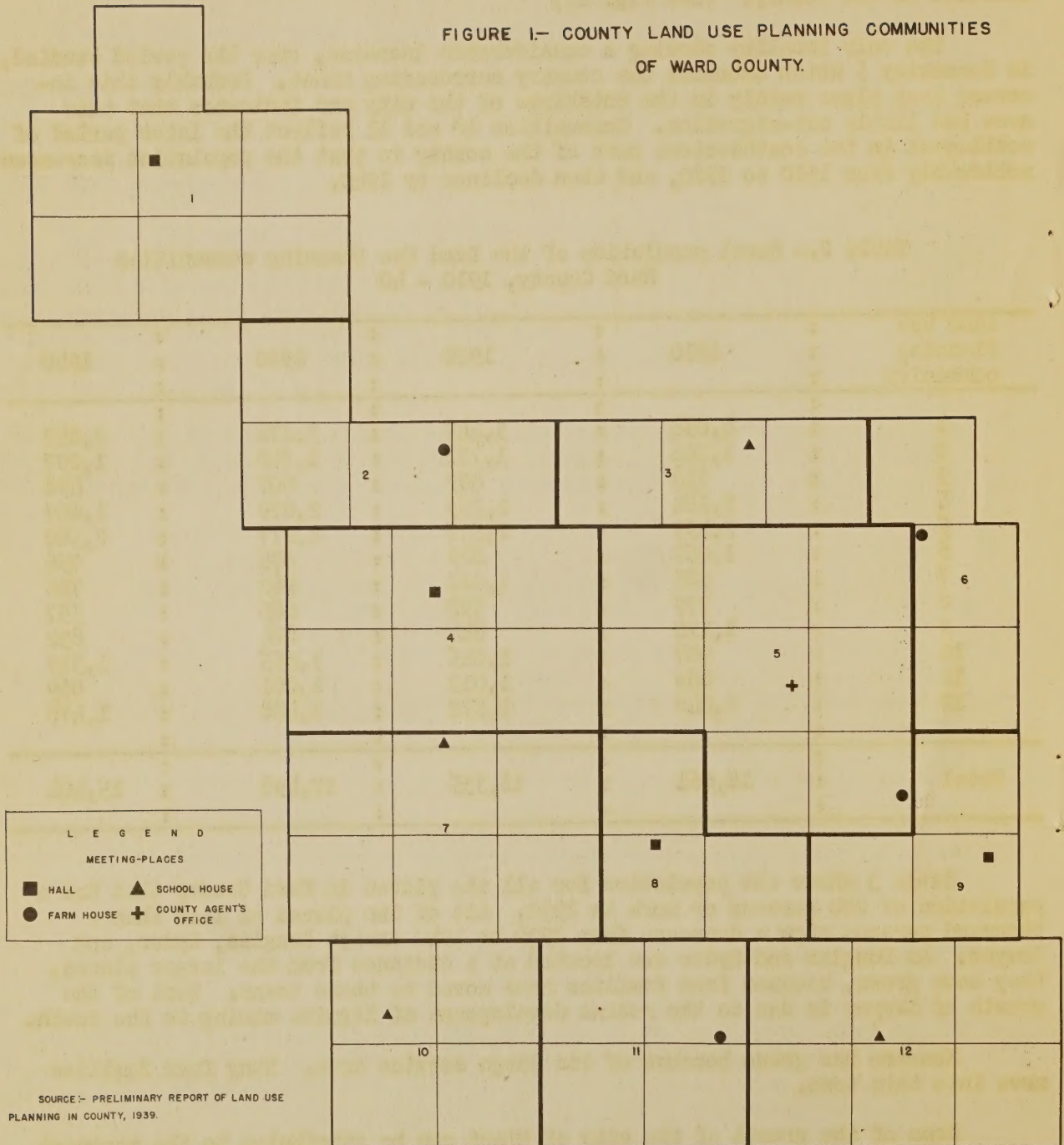


Table 3.- Population of incorporated towns and cities over 200 persons in 1930
Ward County, 1910 - 40

Place	Land Use Planning community	1910	1920	1930	1940
Des Lacs <u>1/</u>	4	--	188	205	197
Sawyer	9	327	241	206	271
Burlington <u>2/</u>	5	--	219	220	<u>4/</u>
Foxholm <u>2/</u>	4	--	219	250	<u>4/</u>
Donnybrook	2	297	267	259	215
Makoti <u>1/</u>	10	--	283	276	212
Douglas	11	171	284	288	313
Carpio	2	257	244	344	322
Ryder	10	338	483	257	467
Berthold	4	454	498	511	428
Kenmare	1	1,437	1,446	1,494	1,528
Minot	5	6,620 <u>3/</u>	10,476	16,099	16,577

1/ Not incorporated 1910.

2/ Not incorporated 1910 and 1940.

3/ Includes population of village of north Minot (432) annexed to Minot between 1910-20.

4/ Data not available.

Movement of farm population to the cities and villages is typical of the rural population shifts throughout the State. In recent studies of farm population changes in North Dakota a general movement of this nature was found. 6/

It does not seem probable that the farm population in Ward County will increase during the next few years. There probably will be a replacement of the present older operators, upon their death or retirement from farming, but the farm population is contracting rather than expanding.

The tendency for the size of farm units to increase as shown during the past three decades is another factor that will limit the opportunities for an increase in farm population.

Because of the present attitude of planning committees toward the management of county-owned land, and the helpful cooperation of County Boards of Commissioners much of this land apparently will not be made available for additional farms. Planning groups are advocating the blocking of present county-owned land or land that the county may acquire in the future into units that will adequately

5/ See North Dakota Farm Population Estimates by the Department of Rural Sociology, N. D. Agri. Expt. Sta. in cooperation with the Bureau of Agricultural Economics 1936-39.

support a farm family, rather than dividing the land into smaller units although this blocking of land is advocated only where there is a sufficient amount of county-owned land to make this feasible.

School Census Enumeration and School Enrollment

A study of the school census enumeration and school enrollment during the period 1920-39 shows the effects of the population changes in Ward County. ^{7/} The changes in the school census and school enrollment follow the population changes closely.

Enumeration: The **total** school census enumeration for the county reached its peak in 1930 and then decreased to 1939. The total enumeration increased until 1930 as the increases in the census for School District No. 1 offset the decreases in the rural districts; then, as the rate of decrease in the rural districts became greater, the county total decreased.

The enumeration for the rural districts, exclusive of School District No. 1, decreased steadily from 6,506 in 1920 to 4,459 in 1939, a decrease of 315 percent. ^{8/} During the same period, the enumeration for School District No. 1 (City of Minot) has almost doubled by increasing from 2,520 in 1920 to 4,729 in 1939 (table 4).

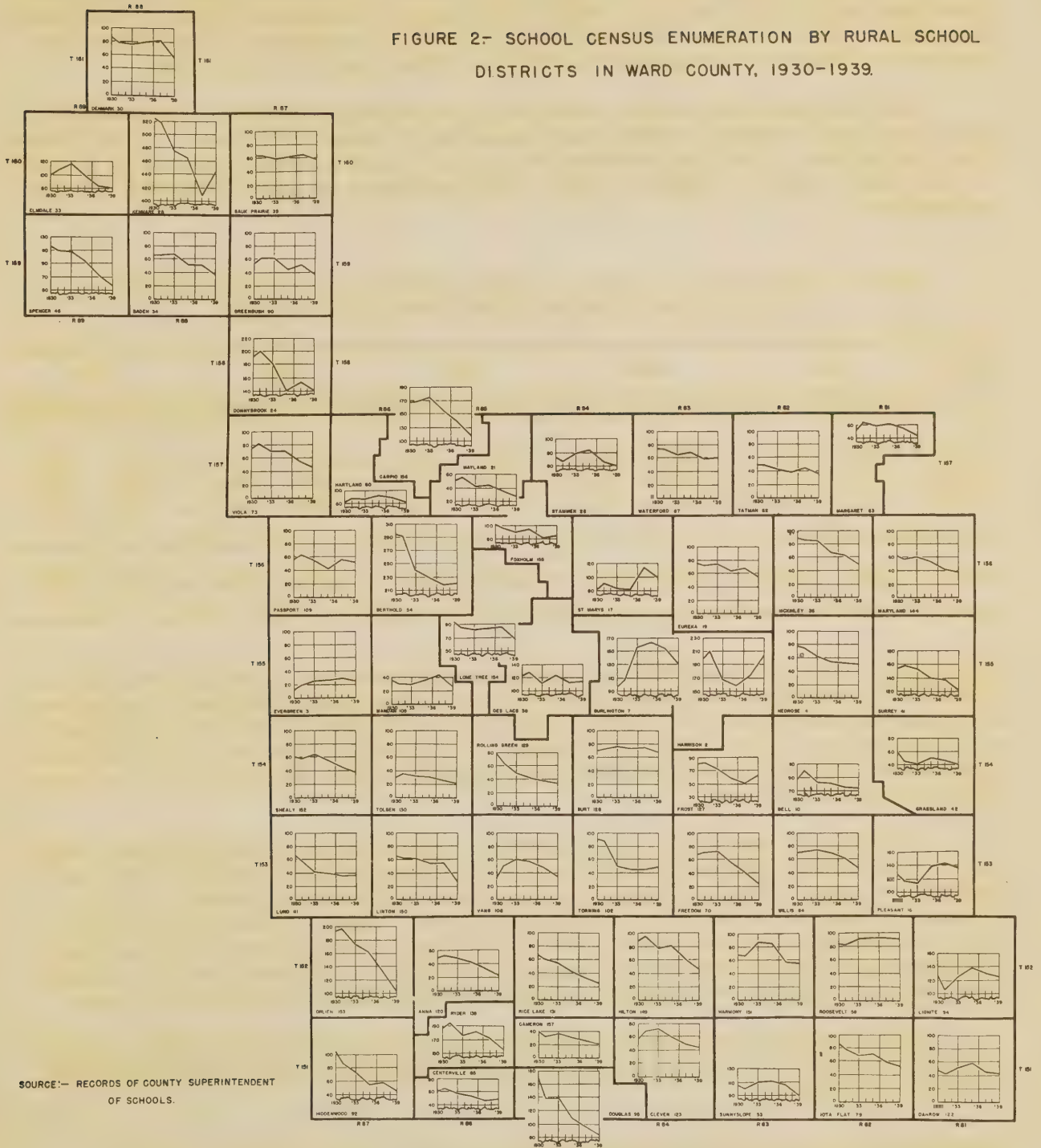
Table 4.- Comparison of school census enumeration for rural districts and School District No. 1, Ward County by selected years, 1920 - 39

Year	Total county		Rural districts		School District No. 1	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
1920	9,026	100.0	6,506	72.1	2,520	27.9
1925	9,528	100.0	6,175	64.8	3,353	35.2
1930	10,132	100.0	5,901	58.2	4,231	41.8
1931	10,111	100.0	5,870	58.1	4,241	41.9
1933	9,932	100.0	5,572	56.1	4,360	43.9
1935	9,853	100.0	5,283	53.6	4,570	46.4
1937	9,647	100.0	4,959	51.4	4,688	48.6
1939	9,188	100.0	4,459	48.5	4,729	51.5

^{7/} The school census is an enumeration of all persons between 6 and 21 years of age, inclusive, whether in school or not. The enumeration was formerly made each year, but since 1930 has been taken in each odd numbered year during the first 20 days of June.

^{8/} (For changes in the census enumeration for the individual rural districts 1930-39, see fig. 2.)

FIGURE 2- SCHOOL CENSUS ENUMERATION BY RURAL SCHOOL DISTRICTS IN WARD COUNTY, 1930-1939.



In 1920, three-fourths of the total persons enumerated lived in the rural districts — in 1939, less than half of the persons enumerated lived in the rural districts. Still further decreases in the rural districts may be expected, as the rate of decrease was greater during the latter part of the period.

Not only has the total enumeration in the rural districts decreased, but there are proportionately fewer young children in these districts. Table 5 shows that the number of children between the ages of 6 and 13 years made up 61 percent of the total census in 1920; by 1939, this group made up only 53 percent of the enumeration.

Table 5.- Comparison of school census enumeration of rural districts by age groups, for selected years, 1920 - 1939

Age groups:	1920		1925		1930		1935		1939	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
6-13	3,959	60.9	3,366	54.5	2,907	49.3	2,736	51.8	2,338	52.5
14-17	1,661	25.5	1,786	28.9	1,661	28.1	1,498	28.3	1,241	27.9
18-21	886	13.6	1,023	16.6	1,333	22.6	1,050	19.9	876	19.6
Total	6,506	100.0	6,125	100.0	5,901	100.0	5,284	100.0	4,450	100.0

Enrollment: The total enrollment for the county decreased steadily from 1920 to 1940. The enrollment for School District No. 1 increased throughout the period, but these increases were more than offset by the decline in the rural districts, which caused the county total to decline. The enrollment in the rural districts dropped 40.8 percent in the 20-year period, while School District No. 1 increased 27.4 percent (table 6). 9/

In 1920, 71 percent of all children enrolled in the county attended school in the rural districts, but by 1940, only 51 percent of the enrollment of the county was found in these districts. The close relationship between the decreases in both enumeration and enrollment for the rural districts indicates that the decrease was due to the loss of children of school age. Some of this decrease may be attributed to the increasing number of children from the rural districts, who have been attending school in Minot during the last few years.

The enrollment for School District No. 1 increased between 1925 and 1931 and then decreased. This is due to the rapid increase in the school population for the same period.

9/ For changes in the individual rural districts 1930-39, see fig. 3.

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FIGURE 3.- SCHOOL ENROLLMENTS BY RURAL SCHOOL DISTRICTS
IN WARD COUNTY, 1930-1939.

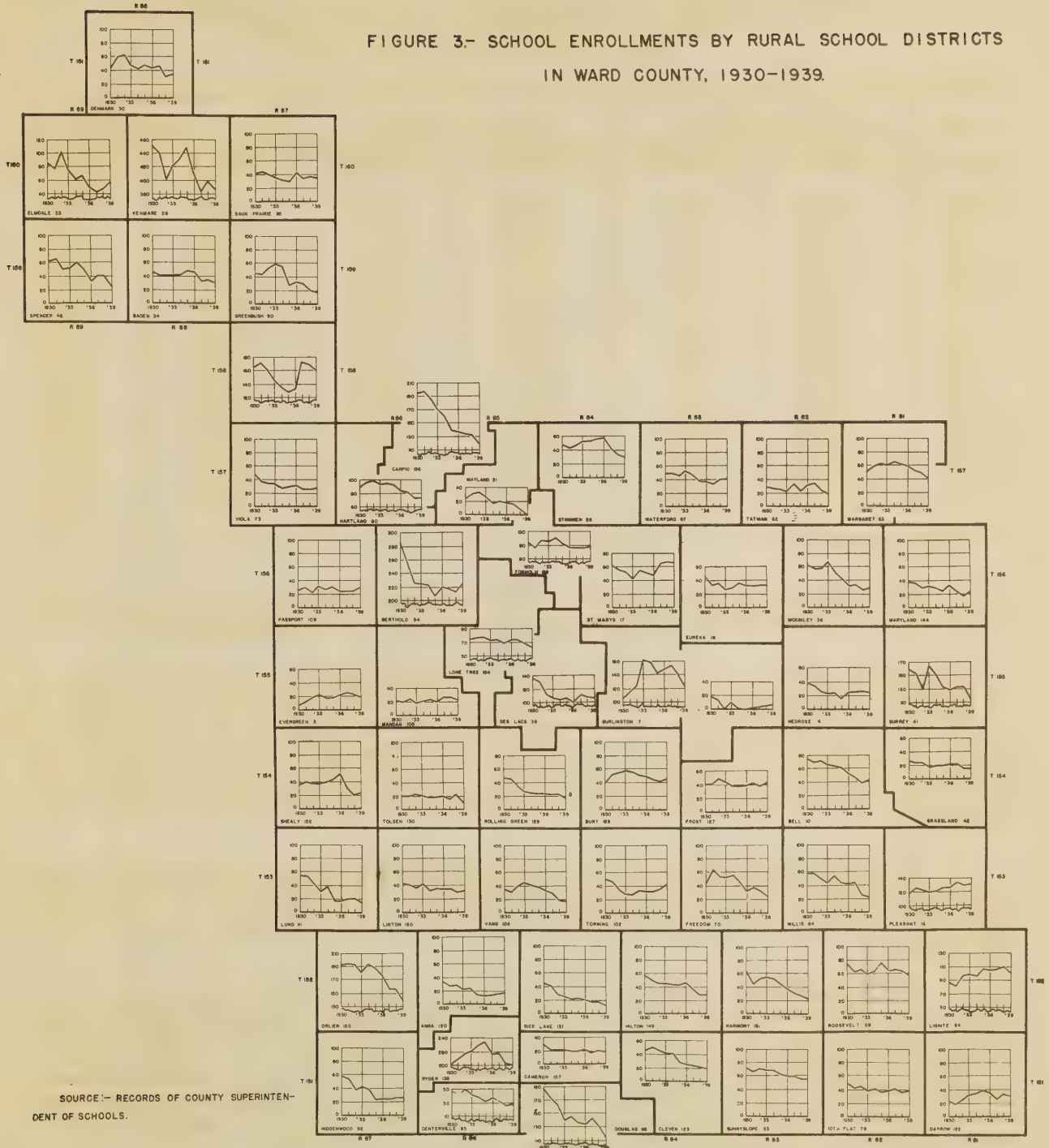


Table 6.- Comparison of school enrollment for rural districts
and School District No. 1, Ward County
for selected years, 1920 - 40

Year	Total county			Rural districts			School District No. 1	
	Number	Percent		Number	Percent		Number	Percent
1920	8,016	100.0	:	5,670	70.7	:	2,346	29.3
1925	7,848	100.0	:	5,118	65.2	:	2,730	34.8
1930	7,829	100.0	:	4,583	58.5	:	3,246	41.5
1931	7,727	100.0	:	4,462	57.7	:	3,265	42.3
1932	7,422	100.0	:	4,334	58.4	:	3,088	41.6
1933	7,280	100.0	:	4,197	57.7	:	3,083	42.3
1934	7,256	100.0	:	4,158	57.3	:	3,098	42.7
1935	7,098	100.0	:	3,992	56.2	:	3,106	43.8
1936	6,899	100.0	:	3,839	55.6	:	3,060	44.4
1937	6,917	100.0	:	3,786	54.7	:	3,131	45.3
1938	6,623	100.0	:	3,608	54.5	:	3,015	45.5
1939	6,523	100.0	:	3,450	52.9	:	3,070	47.1
1940	6,348	100.0	:	3,357	52.9	:	2,991	47.1
:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:

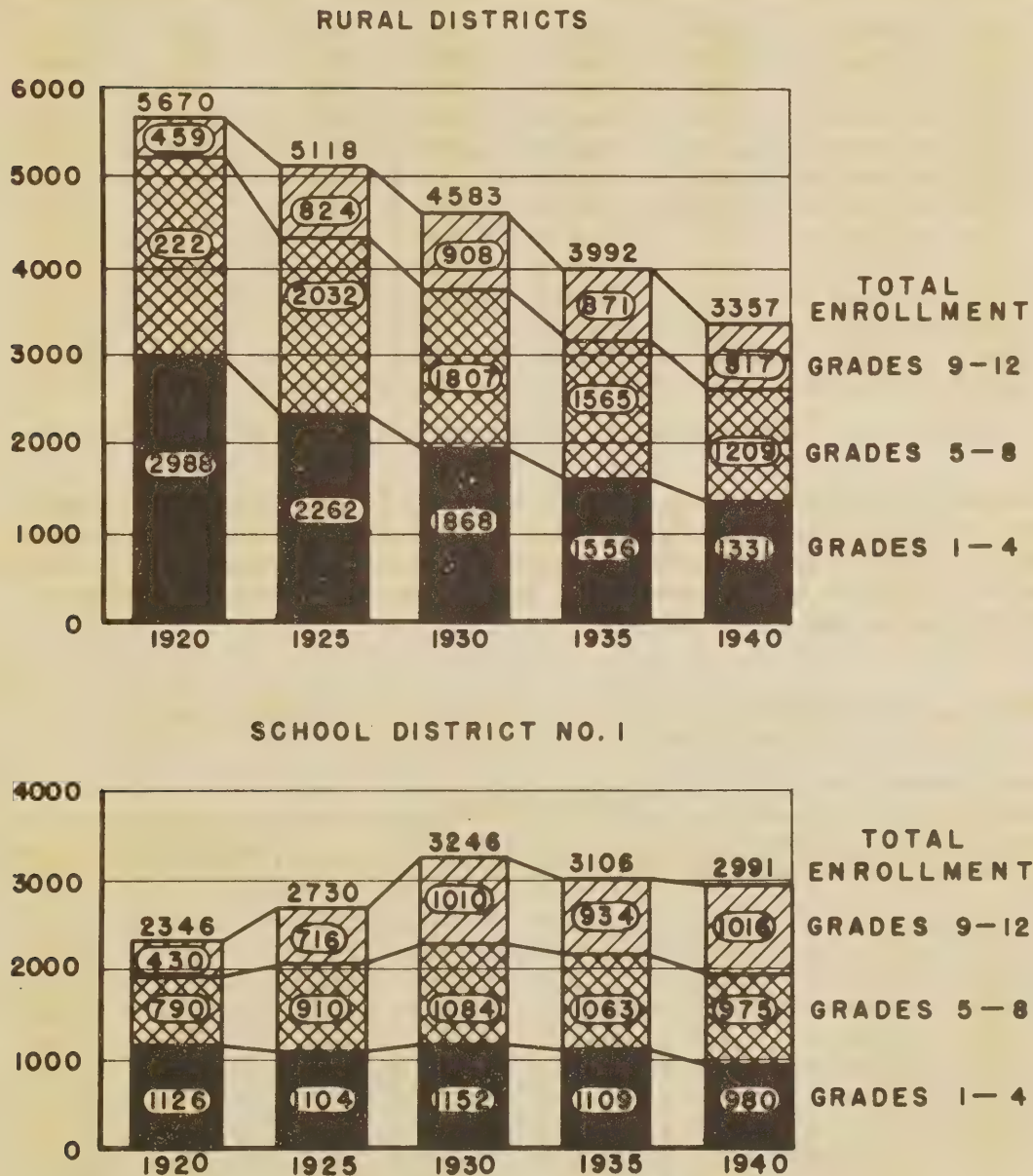
The decrease in enrollment, in both the rural districts and School District No. 1, is due to the outmigration of families of elementary pupils.

In the rural districts the elementary enrollment (grades 1 to 8), made up 92 percent of the total enrollment in 1920, and by 1940 this figure had decreased to 76 percent of the total. The greatest decrease occurred in the enrollment for the first 4 grades; in 1940, the enrollment for these grades was only 44 percent of the 1920 enrollment for the same grades. The enrollment for the grades 5 to 8 in 1940 was 54 percent of the 1920 enrollment for the same group. (See table 7 and fig. 4.)

In School District No. 1, the enrollment for the first 4 grades decreased 13 percent between 1920 and 1940. The enrollment of the grades 5 to 8 increased from 790 to 995 over the same period, an increase of 13 percent. (See table 8 and fig. 4.)

The high-school enrollment for the rural districts more than doubled between 1920 and 1930. From 1930 to 1937, the high-school enrollment stayed relatively constant but has decreased since that time. The decrease in the number of pupils in the grades 5 to 8 indicates that a further decrease in high-school enrollment may be expected during the next few years. The high-school enrollment has continued to make up about one-fourth of the total school enrollment for these districts even though the total enrollment has declined.

FIGURE 4.- COMPARISON OF ENROLLMENT FOR RURAL DISTRICTS AND SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 1, BY GRADE GROUPS, FOR SELECTED YEARS, 1920-1940.



SOURCE:- RECORDS OF COUNTY SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS.

Table 7.- Enrollment for rural districts, by grade groups
for selected years, 1920 - 40

Year	Grade groups							
	Total		1 - 4		5 - 8		High School	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
1920	5,670	100.0	2,988	52.7	2,223	39.2	459	8.1
1925	5,718	100.0	2,262	44.2	2,032	39.7	824	16.1
1930	4,583	100.0	1,868	40.8	1,807	39.4	908	19.8
1931	4,462	100.0	1,776	39.8	1,807	40.5	879	19.7
1932	4,334	100.0	1,738	40.1	1,686	38.9	910	21.0
1933	4,197	100.0	1,647	39.2	1,658	39.5	892	29.3
1934	4,158	100.0	1,655	39.8	1,606	38.6	897	21.6
1935	3,992	100.0	1,556	39.0	1,565	39.2	871	21.8
1936	3,839	100.0	1,453	37.8	1,501	39.1	885	23.1
1937	3,786	100.0	1,454	38.4	1,404	37.1	928	24.5
1938	3,608	100.0	1,397	38.7	1,309	36.3	902	25.0
1939	3,450	100.0	1,345	39.0	1,240	35.9	865	25.1
1940	3,357	100.0	1,331	39.7	1,209	36.0	817	24.3

The number in high-school stayed at a high level, not because there were more children of high-school age, but because a greater proportion of the eighth grade graduates enrolled in high school. More children are attending high school as there is a realization of the need and a desire for additional schooling on the part of the pupils and their parents.

Table 8.- Enrollment for School District No. 1, by grade groups
for selected years, 1920 - 40

Year	Grade groups							
	Total		1 - 4		5 - 8		High school	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
1920	2,346	100.0	1,126	48.0	790	33.7	430	18.3
1925	2,730	100.0	1,104	40.4	910	33.3	716	26.2
1930	3,246	100.0	1,152	35.5	1,084	33.4	1,010	31.1
1931	3,265	100.0	1,256	38.5	1,037	31.8	972	29.8
1932	3,088	100.0	1,109	35.9	1,009	32.7	970	31.4
1933	3,083	100.0	1,077	34.9	1,035	33.6	971	31.5
1934	3,098	100.0	1,102	35.6	1,036	33.4	960	31.0
1935	3,106	100.0	1,109	35.7	1,063	33.2	934	30.1
1936	3,060	100.0	1,101	36.0	996	32.5	963	31.5
1937	3,131	100.0	1,153	36.8	1,017	32.5	961	30.7
1938	3,015	100.0	1,084	35.9	973	32.3	958	31.8
1939	3,070	100.0	1,050	34.2	1,008	32.8	1,012	33.0
1940	2,791	100.0	980	32.8	995	33.3	1,016	33.9

The high-school enrollment almost trebled between 1920 and 1930 in School District No. 1. It decreased between 1930 and 1935 and has increased steadily since that time, reaching its highest point in 1941. Part of the increase during the last few years is due to the number of children living in outlying districts who attend school in Minot.

Present School Organization

Ward County has 61 school districts other than School District No. 1, which includes the city of Minot. These districts are small as they were generally established on the basis of townships regardless of density of population or location of people. Except for the special districts, the school organization still follows the township pattern. 10/

The special districts were established to meet the need for high-school facilities. These districts are located along the railroads because of the growth of towns at the various shipping points and the large amounts of public utility property available for taxing purposes. 11/

The number of small districts has been the greatest obstacle to adjustments in school organization to meet changing conditions. Although some adjustments have been made within the districts to meet local demands for school facilities, they have been made to meet immediate situations with little or no thought for a long-time educational program. For the most part, they have consisted of opening and closing local schools as the school population varied from year to year within the districts. Each district has made its own changes without considering the adjustments made in the adjoining districts. In many instances this has led to an unnecessary duplication of services.

Another disadvantage of small districts, which have small school enrollments, is the considerable variation from year to year caused by the movement of families with children of school age. In many districts, if a large family moves away, it may cause the closing or opening of a one-room school. This presents a serious problem in planning what school facilities will be operated from year to year. Larger school districts would offset some of the changes growing out of this movement of families as enrollment would be large enough to permit the operation of schools at an economical expense even though one or two families did move away. On the other hand, it would not be necessary to open a one-room school to accommodate a large family who might be moving in.

10/ Any platted or incorporated city, town, or village, which constitutes a portion of a school district, may be organized into a special school district, alone or with contiguous territory, after an election for such a purpose is held.

11/ For more detail on the amounts of public utility property in the tax base, see "Preliminary Report on Land Use and Cost of Local Government in Ward County, North Dakota" by Peter L. Hansen and Archie B. Goodman, Bureau of Agricultural Economics, U. S. Department of Agriculture.

Small districts do not permit an efficient system of transportation, so it is often necessary to operate three or four schools with small enrollments, rather than one or two schools with more pupils. This causes the per pupil costs to be high and makes the school system expensive to operate. With the present trend of decline in school enrollments and enumeration, the cost per pupil will increase unless some adjustments are made.

Under the present system, there is a great variation among the districts in the amount of revenue available for school purposes. One index of possible revenue for these purposes is the amount of taxable valuation available per child enumerated. Peter L. Hansen and Archie B. Goodman report that "fourteen of the school districts in Ward County had less than \$2,000 of taxable valuation per child enumerated, while four others had more than \$5,000. The extreme range in taxable valuation per child varies from \$1,240 to \$7,196. Assuming no tax delinquency and the maximum tax levy for elementary school purposes, the poorest district in the county could raise but \$17.34 per child, compared with \$100.74 for the wealthiest district." These figures include School District No. 1.

The variation among the school districts illustrates the lack of equal educational opportunities among the districts. This situation will continue if small school districts are maintained, as there is no opportunity to equalize the tax burden.

With the decline in population and the loss of revenue due to the reduction in the assessment level from 75 to 50 percent and the failure of tax collections in recent years, it has been possible to operate many of the schools only because State funds have been made available which offset the deficiencies in county revenues but these funds have not corrected the cause of the financial problem. Thirteen districts received State funds on the basis of need for school purposes, in 1938-39. Of these, 8 were high-school districts and 5 were districts having elementary only. State funds made up 27 percent of the total current receipts for these high-school districts and 36.6 percent of the receipts for the elementary districts. 12/

There were 126 rural one-room schools, 16 graded schools and 15 high-schools operated in the 61 school districts, other than School District No. 1, in 1938-39. The term "graded school" refers to schools having two or more teachers.

The number of rural one-room schools by size of enrollment for selected years is shown in table 9. There is a decline not only in the number but in the enrollment in these schools. In 1930, of the 144 such schools, 24 percent had less than 10 pupils. The number of schools decreased to 126 in 1939, with 51 percent having less than 10 enrolled. In 1939, 14 of these schools had less than 6 enrolled pupils; this is below the legal minimum for school operation.

12/ Op. cit., p. 30.

It is necessary in many instances to operate schools with enrollments of less than 6 pupils because of the location of the families. Where families are living a great distance from the larger schools with poor transportation facilities, it is sometimes necessary to operate a school in the immediate vicinity to serve them.

Table 9.- Number of one-room schools, by size of school enrollment for selected years

Enrollment	1929 - 1930		1933 - 1934		1938 - 1939	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
0 - 9	35	24.3	56	40.0	65	51.5
10 - 19	92	63.9	71	50.7	52	41.3
20 - 29	15	10.4	11	7.9	8	6.5
30 and over	2	1.4	2	1.4	1	0.8
Total	144	100.0	140	100.0	126	100.0

The number of graded schools decreased from 21 in 1930 to 16 in 1939. Only one open-country graded school operated in 1939. The decrease in the number and size of these schools between 1930 and 1939 is shown in table 10.

Table 10.- Number of graded schools, by size of school enrollment for selected years 1/

Enrollment	1929 - 1930	1933 - 1934	1938 - 1939
	Number	Number	Number
10 - 19	-	1	-
20 - 29	1	1	1
30 - 39	4	-	-
40 - 49	2	2	4
50 - 59	1	5	-
60 - 69	2	1	2
70 - 79	2	1	3
80 - 89	2	3	2
90 - 99	2	2	2
100 - 149	3	3	-
150 and over	2	1	2
Total	21	20	16

1/ Includes open-country graded schools.

In one school district which had been operating a graded consolidated school, the loss of revenue caused the School Board to discontinue payment of transportation and made it the responsibility of the school patrons to defray this cost. There was an immediate demand for the discontinuance of the consolidated school and a request for the establishment of the former one-room school system in the district.

The number of high schools remained the same over the 10-year period 1930-39. The enrollment of the high schools decreased very little. The groupings of the high schools in the northern and southwestern parts of the county has led to a competition for pupils which has kept the enrollments below the level of the most economical operation. Nine of these 15 high schools had fewer than 50 pupils enrolled (Table 11).

Table 11.- Number of high schools, by size of school enrollment for selected years

Enrollment	1929 - 1930	1933 - 1934	1938 - 1939
	Number	Number	Number
10 - 19	2	1	1
20 - 29	4	2	2
30 - 39	-	3	3
40 - 49	2	3	3
50 - 59	-	-	1
60 - 69	1	1	2
70 - 79	2	2	1
80 - 89	-	-	-
90 - 99	1	1	-
100 - 149	2	2	2
150 and over	1	-	-
Total	15	15	15

The cost per pupil increases as the enrollment decreases. It seems advisable, therefore, that some of these high schools be closed and the pupils transported to the remaining schools, which have adequate facilities to handle more pupils.

Before any of these schools are closed, a careful study should be made to insure the most advantageous reorganization and to locate the schools so they would best serve the local school patrons.

Attendance Areas

Figures 5 and 6 show the 1940-41 attendance areas of the schools in Ward County, with the location of resident pupils, and the schools which they attend.

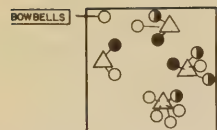
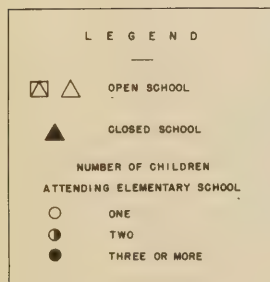
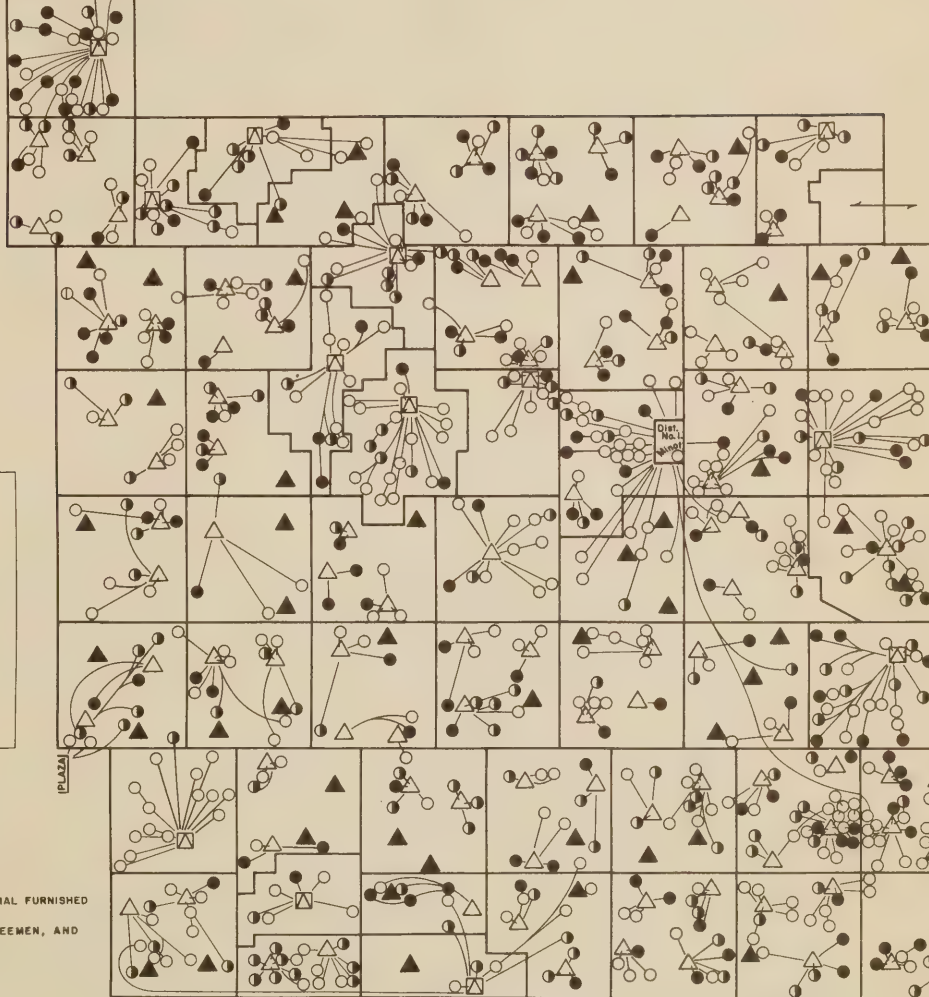
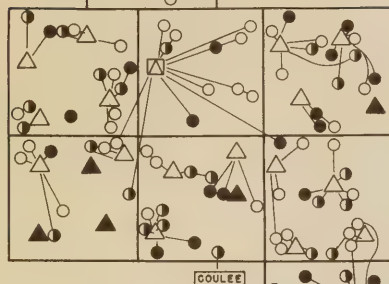
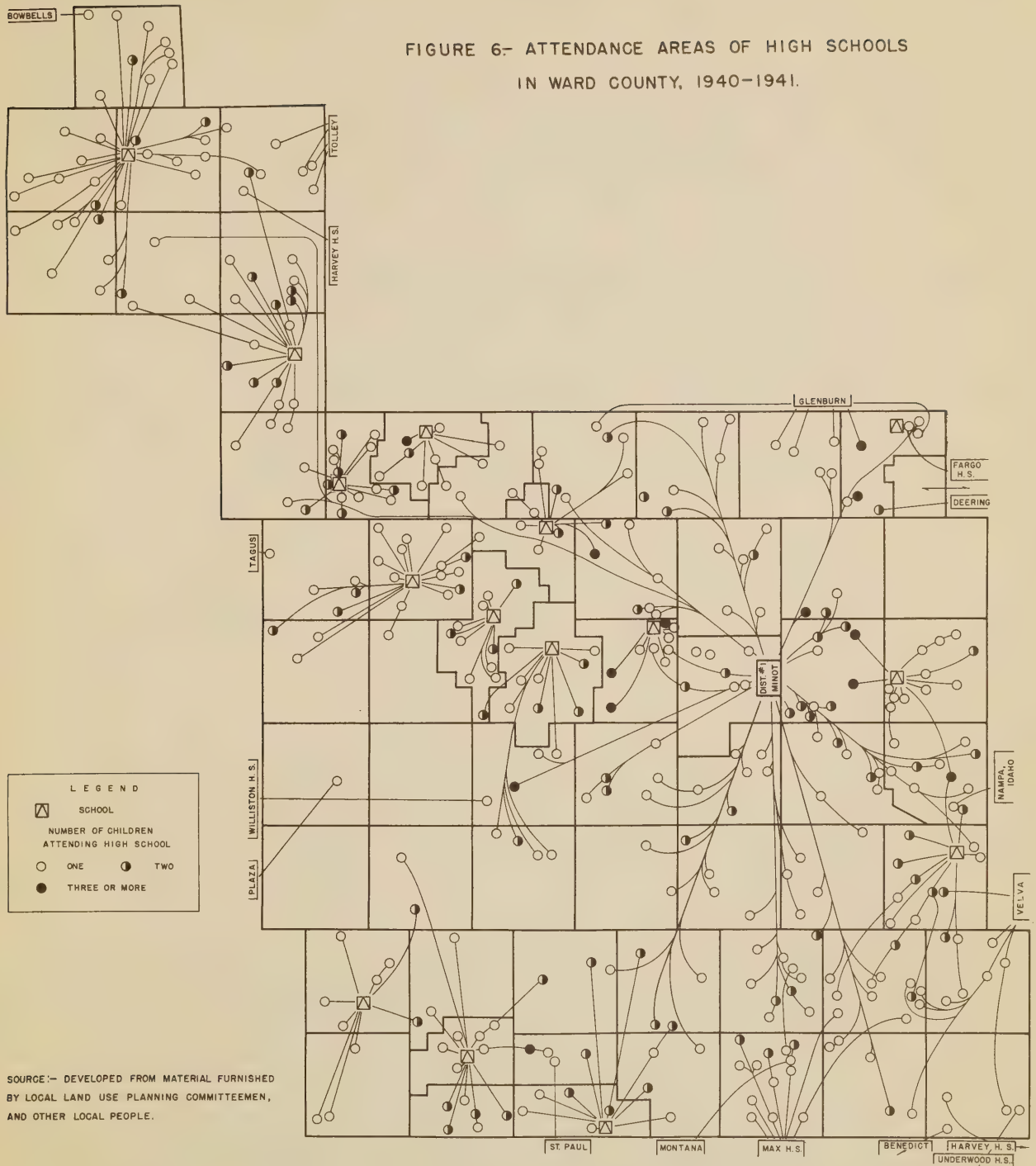


FIGURE 5- ATTENDANCE AREAS OF ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS
IN WARD COUNTY, 1940-1941.



SOURCE:- DEVELOPED FROM MATERIAL FURNISHED
BY LOCAL LAND USE PLANNING COMMITTEEMEN, AND
OTHER LOCAL PEOPLE.

FIGURE 6- ATTENDANCE AREAS OF HIGH SCHOOLS
IN WARD COUNTY, 1940-1941.



No attempt was made to learn the home location of children attending school in Ward County who lived in other counties. Attendance area may be defined as the area within which children attend a certain school. There may be two or more attendance areas within one school district.

The attendance areas for the elementary schools are confined mainly to district boundaries. Many children have to go longer distances to attend school in their home district than if they were allowed to attend school in an adjoining district. Many schools with small enrollments are being operated in one district within a short distance of another small school in the neighboring district.

The children of school age in the northern and eastern parts of Harrison District attend the Model School at the State Teachers' College in Minot, which accounts for the large number shown to be attending School District No. 1.

Figure 6 shows the attendance areas of the high schools of the county. The occasional overlapping of these attendance areas shows some duplication of these services within the county. The large number of pupils attending Minot is due to the improved transportation system, the large primary service area of Minot, and the wish, on the part of the parents, to give their children the best school opportunity available. Many of these children live in Minot during the school term, each year.

The overlapping of the attendance areas illustrates the duplication of high-school services within the county. To suggest further the number of high schools in the northern portion of the county—a circle with a radius of 10 miles centered at Foxholm would include 5 high schools besides the one at Foxholm.

Location of Farm Families

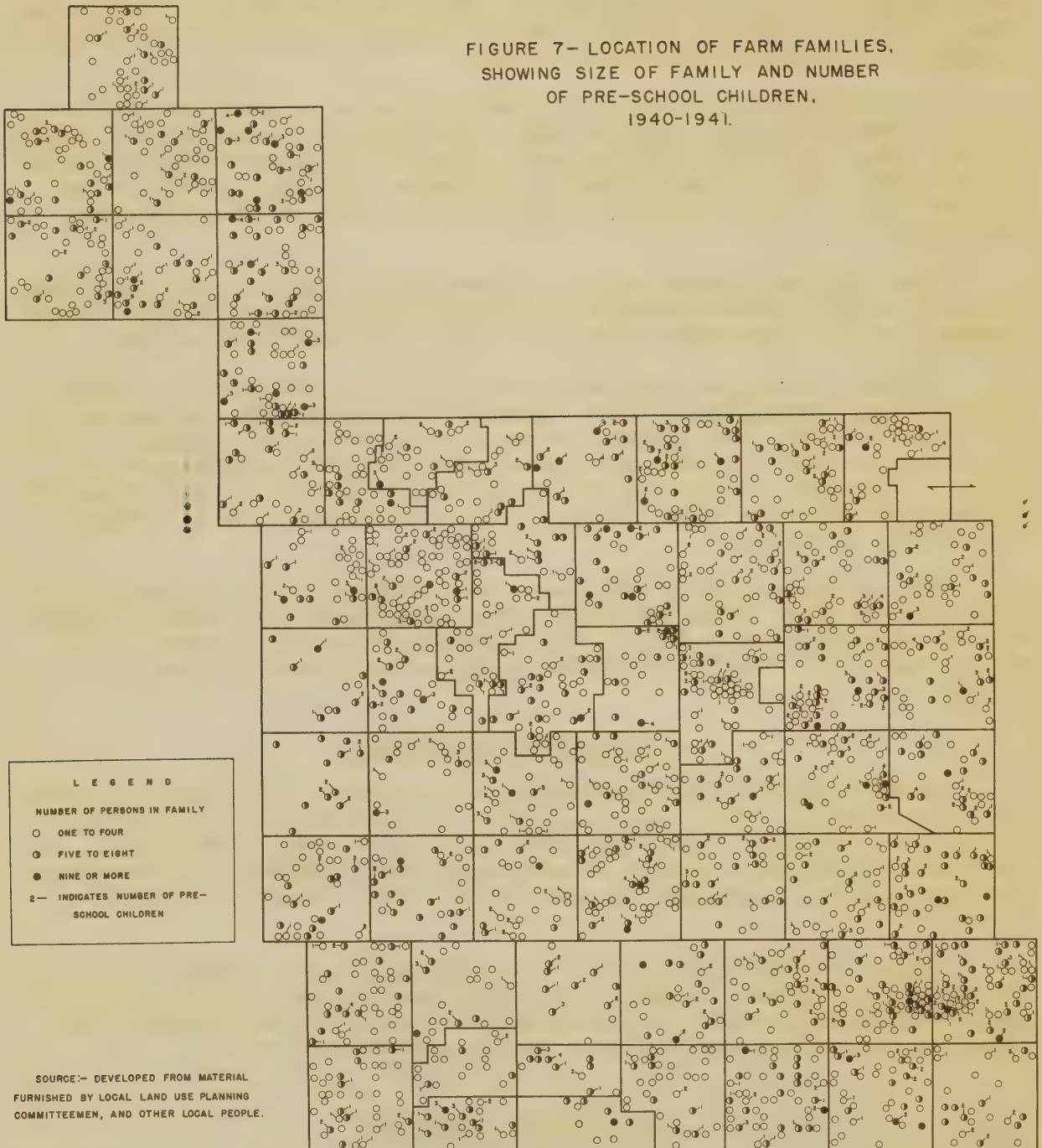
Before adequate school districts may be planned, it is necessary to know where the potential school needs are located. This invaluable information can be furnished efficiently and accurately by Land Use Planning Committeemen. In this instance community Land Use Planning committeemen furnished information on the location, size of family, and number of pre-school children in each farm family.

Figure 7 shows the location of the families, by size, and the location of the pre-school children, in 1941. This map illustrates the relative density of population among the present school districts and can be used to indicate the districts where the demand for future school services will occur.

Future School Population

The downward trend in number of children from 6 to 21 years of age that has occurred during the past decade will probably continue for the next few years.

FIGURE 7- LOCATION OF FARM FAMILIES,
SHOWING SIZE OF FAMILY AND NUMBER
OF PRE-SCHOOL CHILDREN,
1940-1941.



Assuming no in or out migration, there will be a decrease of approximately 300 children within these ages, by 1944. Grade-school enrollments would decrease approximately 14 percent.

The high-school enrollment will not decrease so rapidly, but there will be a slight reduction during the next 5 years. The estimates for high-school enrollments are high, as these forecasts are based on the school census, and there are more children within the high-school age groups. 13/

The Place of the Rural School in Rural Life

The school is the most important social institution in the rural areas, as it usually touches the life of every individual in the community and can render many services not only to the school pupils but to persons of all ages. In the rural areas and smaller towns and cities, the school is the "hub" of community life. Each activity, whether participated in by the pupils or adults, tends to strengthen community solidarity.

This last is true in Ward County. Some of the extra-curricular services are listed here to show the importance of the school as a social institution.

The Young Citizens' League, a movement started a few years ago in South Dakota, has 54 chapters and a membership of 654 in Ward County. These groups are composed entirely of grade-school pupils and teach the democratic way of life through the actual participation of the pupils.

In 1940-41, there were 15 Junior Red Cross Chapters with an active membership of 185 school pupils.

The schools have provided the greater part of the recreational activities for the rural communities through athletic contests, plays, school programs, parties, and picnics. In some districts all neighborhood gatherings are held in the schoolhouses during the winter months.

In school districts where there are no township halls, the schools are used as meeting places of the Farmers Union, the Townsend Clubs, the Women's Christian Temperance Union, Homemakers' Clubs, Land Use Planning groups, and the workers of the Agricultural Adjustment Administration. In many instances the schools are used for polling places for all elections.

In places where there are no rural churches, the schoolhouses are used for Sunday Schools. In two of the smaller towns, Bible schools are held in the school buildings during the summer. Church carnivals and bazaars, community fairs and dinners, are held in the schools throughout the county.

13/ These estimates are based on the age distribution of the school census for 1939. Adjustments have been made for probable mortality according to the U. S. Bureau of the Census Mortality Tables.

In 1940-41, 105 schools had hot-lunch programs, using the surplus commodities available through the Public Welfare Board and the Federal Surplus Commodities Corporation which were supplemented with other food contributed by school patrons. In 20 of these schools all of the food was furnished by local school patrons, with the patrons taking turns in providing the hot portion of the lunch.

The schoolhouses are also used for evening classes in adult education under the supervision of the Work Projects Administration. Most of the classes are now located in the cities and villages, but this agency is contemplating a program to include rural areas, the program to be centered around the schools.

There are 11 active Parent-Teachers' Associations outside of the city of Minot. Most of these organizations are located in the towns and villages. They are under the jurisdiction of a County Council made up of representatives of local groups.

Kenmare High School is the only school in the county that teaches vocational agriculture. At the present, the school is offering training courses for national defense jobs.

Evidently the schools play an exceedingly important part in the rural life of Ward County. To change the school system without recognizing the role of the school in community life may lead to the disintegration of the communities, rather than the strengthening of them. It is necessary, therefore, that the communities be carefully studied before any plan of school reorganization is attempted and that adjustments be made in accordance with existing community interests.

Possible Adjustments

The present school system in Ward County is a "carry-over" from a period of expanding population, high land values, and high farm prices. Today, with the decrease in land values, the loss of revenue for school purposes, and the decline in rural population, the people of Ward County are faced with a choice between continuing with the present system of high per pupil costs and unequal school opportunity or establishing a school organization more able to equalize school opportunities at a lower cost per pupil. The decision concerning the method of meeting the school problem rests with the local people.

In the more sparsely settled areas, such as Ward County, the enlargement of the school district offers one solution to the problem. This method of expanding the administrative unit could eliminate the present duplication of services—allow for more equitable distribution of revenue, and afford more equal school opportunities to rural children.

Each district should be large enough to provide adequate school facilities and provide sufficient revenue to insure its continuance, but it should be small enough so transportation will be economical. The district should also be large

enough to provide the necessary administrative and supervisory services by bringing together enrollments large enough to provide economical operation.

These objectives could be more nearly realized through the adoption of the Enlarged Community District or the County Unit Plan, or a combination of them.

Enlarged Community Districts: The Enlarged Community Districts would be based on existing communities within the county. The geographical basis for the rural community may be defined as "a rural area within which the people have a common center of interest, usually a village, and within which they have a sense of common obligations and responsibilities." 14/

Each district would have a District Board which would be responsible for the supervision, operation, and maintenance of the school facilities.

It would be preferable, though not essential, to have one high school with subsidiary elementary attendance areas within each district. This would assure each district a full 12-year educational program and would allow the town and rural patrons to have a voice in the administration of the schools, which does not always occur under the present system. One-room schools would still be operated in the more sparsely settled places, but the attendance areas would depend upon the location of the school patrons, rather than the boundaries of existing political subdivisions.

This system would permit the consolidation of many small schools which is not possible under the township type of organization. The school districts would have to be so planned that the greatest utilization of present school buildings could be obtained. (At no time should existing school buildings be abandoned merely to establish larger districts.) This method would allow for the necessary flexibility in the school-district boundaries to meet many of the changes in social and economic conditions.

Through the reorganization of schools, a broader curriculum could be introduced which would afford the rural pupil a more equal opportunity with the city child for an adequate education.

With the larger number of teachers per school that this plan would allow, each member of the teaching staff could specialize in one or two subjects and so gain a higher degree of efficiency. This is especially true in the upper grades. Another advantage to be gained through a larger teaching staff is the introduction of supervised extra-curricular activities. The introduction of such courses as physical education, music and other fine arts, or handicrafts, would be an additional advantage to the community life. Under this system the school would become a vital institution in strengthening the rural community.

14/ Sanderson, Dwight Locating the Rural Community, Cornell Extension Bulletin 413, June 1939, p. 6.

It would be necessary to determine the location of the true rural communities before this system could be inaugurated successfully.

County Unit Plan: The County Unit Plan establishes the county as the school district. The administration and supervision of the schools then become the responsibility of the County Superintendent and a County School Board. In some States, cities and towns with a population of more than 2,000 are established as separate school districts and are under the supervision of a separate School Board and Superintendent.

Under the County Unit Plan, the schools are supported by a county school tax. This procedure would not only simplify the accounting system now used but would give a more equitable distribution of revenue throughout the county.

Before the County Unit Plan could be adopted, it would be necessary to have State legislation providing for the establishment of such districts.

Possible Combination of Systems: Another alternative for Ward County would be the adoption of a combination of the Enlarged Community District and the County Unit Plan. Under this proposal, Enlarged Community Districts would be established for the supervision and maintenance of local schools. Thus, each district would exercise local control over the schools and be responsible for providing the school facilities needed in that district. School revenue would be collected through a county tax and paid to the county treasurer. These moneys would then be allocated to each district, on the basis of school-census enumeration or school enrollment, for the operation of the local schools.

Need for Further Study

Land Use Planning committees in cooperation with School Boards and county school officials should appraise carefully the adequacy of information included in this and other studies as a suitable basis from which to project plans for school reorganization. To learn and trace the boundaries of the existing communities in Ward County should be the next step in the study of school reorganization.

After adjustments are made further studies should be conducted to learn whether the schools meet the needs, and continue to meet them, in the most efficient way. This is especially true in an area where there is a high rate of farm tenancy and migration.

Method of Study

Early in the planning work, the County Land Use Planning Committee discussed the problem of the rural schools in Ward County. The committee decided that more information was needed in order to understand more clearly the problem, and requested assistance in obtaining this information.

In response, the author gathered information on the population trends and the trends in the school census and school enrollment, from secondary sources. These data were presented to the County Land Use Planning Committee for its consideration.

On the basis of this presentation, the County Committee decided that further work was necessary to complete the study, so it appointed a Subcommittee on School Problems. On this Subcommittee were three members of the County Land Use Planning Committee, the Associate County Agent and the County Superintendent of schools.

The Subcommittee decided that these additional data were needed:

(1) location of farm families; (2) size of family; (3) number of pre-school children, and, (4) number of children attending school and the schools which they attended in 1939-40.

As all of this information had to be obtained from primary sources, the following plan was devised:

- (1) The Subcommittee designated local people, many of whom were local Land Use Planning Committeemen, to get this information for each school district.
- (2) Forms for this purpose were devised. Each form carried all of the families listed on the 1939 school census for its district. (See appended form.)
- (3) The local cooperators were asked to check the local list for accuracy and bring it up to date for the school year 1940-41.
- (4) An outline map of the school district was enclosed and the local cooperators were asked to locate the families according to their number on the enumeration sheet.
- (5) A letter of transmittal was sent to each person cooperating in the study, explaining the need for the information as part of the planning work.
- (6) The completed forms were returned to the Subcommittee and were checked for completeness by the County Agent.
- (7) The forms were turned over to the author for summary and analysis.

In addition to the above data, the author suggested that the Subcommittee secure information on the neighborhoods and community groupings as a more adequate basis for reorganizing the schools. This has not been undertaken to date but should be the next step in the solution of the problem.

Summary

(1) Ward County is typical of the settlement of western North Dakota and eastern Montana, in that it was rather quickly settled in the 20-year period following the building of the railroads. The greatest period of settlement occurred during the "land boom" of 1900-10.

(2) The total population increased between 1910 and 1940 but the statistics for the rural areas declined steadily during that period. The increase in the total population of the county was due to the growth of the city of Minot.

(3) The school census enumeration for the rural districts decreased 31.5 percent from 1920-39, in accordance with the decline in population. Decreases in school census enumeration varied widely among the districts. The school census for School District No. 1, city of Minot, increased steadily over this period.

(4) School enrollment decreased 40.8 percent during the 20-year period 1920-40. During the same period, the enrollment of School District No. 1 increased 27.4 percent. The decrease in enrollment for the rural districts was due to the loss of elementary pupils. High-school enrollment stayed at a high level, because a greater percentage of the eighth grade graduates attended high school.

(5) Under the present school organization, there are 61 school districts other than School District No. 1, and a joint district with McHenry County. These 61 districts operated 126 one-room schools, 16 graded schools, and 15 high schools, during the 1938-39 school year. Between 1930 and 1939, the number of one-room schools decreased from 144 to 126; graded schools decreased from 21 to 16; and the number of high schools remained the same.

(6) The attendance areas for the elementary schools are confined mainly within the school district boundaries, whereas the high-school attendance areas overlap school-district lines, as well as attendance areas.

(7) The downward trend of the number of children from 6 to 21 years of age will continue for the next few years. Assuming no in- or out-migration, this group will have decreased about 300, by 1944. Grade-school enrollment will decrease about 14 percent during this period, and high-school enrollment will decrease at a slower rate. These trends must be kept in mind as adjustments are planned.

(8) Possible adjustments to meet the rural-school problem are the use of the Enlarged Community District, or the County Unit Plan, or a combination of the two.

(9) It will be necessary to delineate communities and neighborhoods in the county as a basis for successful reorganization.

1. Check list for accuracy of names and locations of families with children in school last year. Add all missing information and bring list up to date for school year 1940-41. Draw a line through families not residing in school district 1940-41.
2. Indicate school at which the children were attending by placing the school number in Col. 9. If children attended school outside of own district, place the school and district numbers in Col. 10 and place a check mark in Cols. 6, 7, or 8 to indicate which children attended outside of own district.
3. Add complete information for all other farm families not shown on list that were residing in school district, whether they had children attending school or not.

WCS - 3
1939-1940

1939-1940

SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. .

LIST OF FARM FAMILIES IN

[illegible]

